

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/814,618
Reply to Office Action dated January 4, 2006

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Remarks:

Applicants have read and considered the Office Action dated January 4, 2006 and the references cited there. Claims 16-21 have been amended. Claims 15, 22 and 23 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1-14, 16-21 and 24 are currently pending.

Reconsideration of the Application is hereby requested.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), FIRST PARAGRAPH

Claims 15 and 18-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Hori in view of Moser. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Claims 1-14 and 24 were allowed, while claims 16-17 were objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter.

In order to accelerate prosecution only, Applicants have cancelled claims 15 and 22-23. Claims 16 and 17 have been amended to rewrite them in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim 15. Claims 18-21 are amended to depend from claim 16.

Applicants assert that the claims all include subject matter indicated as allowable. In view of the above and foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), be withdrawn.

The rejections of the original claims are believed to have been overcome by the present remarks. From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order, and such an action is earnestly solicited.

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A speedy and favorable action on the merits is hereby solicited. If the Examiner feels that a telephone interview may be helpful in this matter, please contact Applicants' Representative at (612) 336-4728.



Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.

Dated: 2/6/06

By: 

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GAS/km